

WORLD STARVATION NOW ADMITTED

Not due to natural causes, but to the price system

IT IS no pleasure for those who have for months been warning against the danger of famine to say, "I told you so!" Starvation for millions of people is too grim a prospect. Nor is the fact that the United Nations have now recognized the palpable fact of mass hunger any guarantee that anything will be done about it.

Speaking at the UNO General Assembly on 13 February, Ernest Bevin stated that in the first six months of 1946 importing countries will require 17,000,000 tons of wheat and flour, whereas the expected supply is estimated at only 12,000,000 tons. He added that there were good reasons for thinking that "the deficit will be even larger than the 5,000,000 tons already mentioned."

To indicate the extent of the likely famine, Bevin declared: "We are dealing with 1,000,000,000 of the world population who in

the next few months may be faced with famine." It is estimated that in Europe there are 40,000,000 people consuming an average of 1,500 calories a day. This is an average figure. Many millions are below it, and it is impossible to know the number of those who are hungry, in addition to the Far East. It must be a terrifically large figure.



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We have pointed out for weeks now the plight of the people of Germany and Central Europe. Bidault and Wellington Koo pointed out to UNO the serious conditions in France and China respectively. There can now be no excuse: Bevin gives 1,000 millions—half the population of the world—as facing famine. For months Governments have been trying to cover up the starvation conditions which face workers almost everywhere. If they are forced to admit it now, we may be sure that they do not exaggerate the picture.

INDIA AND MALAYA

In India it is officially estimated that there is a grain deficit of 3,000,000 tons, and there are no reserves. Indians are rationed to 1 lb. of grain a day, and are subsisting on 1,000 calories daily—just over one third of the 2,800 calories regarded by nutritionists as adequate to maintain health. Indians had the worst diet of any country in the world before the war; yet the *News Chronicle* states that their diet to-day provides half the calories they had in pre-war days. A repetition of the 1943 famine is expected.

In Malaya, the food situation is desperate, and the cost of living is anything from 5 to 20 times the pre-war level. The position of children was made worse at the beginning of the occupation by the British, because an order from London suddenly cancelled the meals which had been given free in the native schools. Another factor which contributes to the starvation is the price of rubber. The Government, by arrangement with America, has fixed the price at 10d. per lb. At this price the growers cannot make a profit, and so "rubber cannot be produced". (*Manchester Guardian*, 10/2/46). The same source adds that "labour cannot be got at this price level. To give native labour even a bare livelihood it is agreed by all that wages must be three times the pre-war level." These observations give the key to the economic causes of the world famine.

CAPITALIST ECONOMICS THE CAUSE

The distinguishing feature of the capitalist system is that goods are produced in order to be sold. Production therefore depends on the existence of a market, and if there is no market, if people can't buy the goods, they won't be produced. Nowhere is this truer than in agriculture. The farmer or peasant has to lay out money and labour for months before he sells his product and recoups himself. Now if the workers in general are paid such poor wages that they cannot afford more than a dead minimum (and sometimes not even that) then the farmer doesn't produce more than a minimum of the food, for he will lose his outlay if the product can't be sold, or is left to be bought up by the government for less than cost.

Furthermore, if there is a bumper crop, the goods flood the market, the price falls, and many farmers are ruined just because the good crop has lowered prices below the level at which he can recover his outlay, and begin

offered for sale would fall still further and the profits of the food producing industry would also fall still further. To protect the price of food—and this means to keep the price above that at which millions of people can afford to buy it—only two courses are open: not to produce the food in "excess" in the first place, or to destroy the "surplus" by ploughing crops in, burning wheat, or throwing fish back into the sea. Prices are raised, and the producer is able to make a profit (often only enough to allow him to struggle through next season); but inevitably a large section of the population goes hungry.

GOVERNMENTS' FUTILE APPEALS

It is not the wickedness of individual capitalist producers which is at fault. Often the farmers and peasants live almost on starvation level. They are at the mercy of the market—of the capitalist mode of production. In India, it is exactly the peasants who provide the bulk of the starving population. Modern famines are not due to any "wickedness" on the part of the primary producers (though we would not say the same of the middlemen who hoard the much needed food until they can sell it at outrageous scarcity prices); they are inevitable symptoms of the market economy of to-day.

Governments understand the position alright; that's why they offer subsidies, why they enable restrictionism to be practised on the scale which makes famines possible. They are acting as one would expect them to act—in the interests of the big concerns involved. The State is the executive committee of the ruling class, and it is simply unrealistic to expect them to act in the interests of society as a whole. Indeed, it is not possible for anyone or any single group to act on behalf of society as a whole. Only the individuals who compose society can do that, by organizing themselves in such a way that they control economy directly.

The State, however, through its spokesmen like Bevin, Keynes, and all the rest of them, has to appear to concern itself with society as a whole; and therefore it would never continue to ride. But in fact, the world with food shortages, a problem that requires the energies of industry as a whole to solve it, all that governments can do is to appease farmers to grow more food! Obviously if it were communally feasible for the farmers and peasants of the world to grow more food there would be no famine. If the poverty of the workers the world over permitted it, there would be more food, and the very fact that they could buy would provide the demand without which, under capitalism, no supply can be forthcoming.

It is useless for Bevin to imply that the causes of the famine are natural causes—the crop failures in South Africa and India. The

United States have had a record crop for two years running now, and have ample reserves. We are always hearing about this "age of transport", about technical progress having established the efficient unity of the world, and so on. Under a rational system of economy crop failures in one part (even if they were due to natural, instead of largely economic causes) could be compensated by the plenty elsewhere.

WORLD SOLUTION

The capitalist press, both left and right, shows itself utterly incapable (unwilling) to realize the full extent of the problem. The Tory papers groan about ration cuts and make anti-Labour Party propaganda out of the situation. The working class of this country have been and still are unenfranchised. In there is no problem at all here comparable with that in Europe, or India, or China. Meanwhile, the Labour press seeks to excuse Bevin's complete failure to mention economic causes in his survey of world food conditions, by declaring that the people of this country are better fed now than they were before the war, and calling for a tightening of the belt. As if the cutting down on dried eggs in this country of 47 millions will make any difference to the lot of the 1,000 million whom Bevin says are facing famine!

To remedy an evil, one must look to its cause. The cause of the present famine, and of the chronic food shortage of decades past, is the capitalist mode of production. Its solution is the abandonment of that economy, which ties the producers to the market which demands scarcity in order to keep prices up. Human beings need food. And production must be to supply needs—human needs, not market needs. The peoples of the world will have to break the State power which exists to defend the market economy and the handful of capitalists who profit from it before they can produce enough to satisfy the elementary food needs of men.

There is blood on your hands Mr. Lawson!

THE cruel and idiotic policy of the British Government is driving the Spanish Anti-fascists interned at Chelvey to take refuge in madness and suicide. On the 11th July, 1945, Agustín Soler committed suicide at Kirkham Camp. Since then two other Spaniards have gone insane. The most recent tragic case is that of Eustasio Bustos, aged 53 and belonging to the Spanish Libertarian Movement.

On Monday, 4th February E. Bustos disappeared from the camp. He left his money, his papers and all his other belongings behind. His comrades immediately feared that he had committed suicide; he had been ill for some time and the continued internment had driven him into a state of despair.

Nothing was heard of him for two weeks till he was found in Sunday, the 17th February, on the Anglerark Moors in Lancashire, suffering from exposure and burnt feet. The burns were due to the fact that Bustos, obviously in a demented state, had set fire to his shippers in order to keep his feet warm. The authorities believe that he put his feet near the blaze and then lost consciousness and so got badly burnt.

He was taken to Chorley hospital suffering from starvation and shock as well as exposure and burnt feet. It was found by a shepherd on a bleak stretch of the moors. He was lying among the rocks, semi-conscious. After his feet had been burnt he had lain in agony for several days. He had to be carried a mile by stretcher down the hillside.

His comrades went to see him at the hospital and brought him his guitar but he was too ill to be allowed visitors.

Thus a new tragic episode is added to the pathetic story of the Spanish anti-fascists interned in England. Like his comrades, Bustos had escaped from Spain after the civil war; he had been interned by the Vichy Government and used as slave labour by the Germans. He was "liberated" by the Americans and handed over to the British authorities who kept him prisoner for over a year. Ten years of sufferings, of privations, of humiliations, of mental agony. Is it surprising that he should have gone insane, that he should have wanted to put an end to his life?

We charge the British Government, we charge Mr. Lawson with the crime of driving men to insanity and death. They cannot plead ignorance. In letters to the Press, in the

Industrial Notes

AMERICAN T.U. BOSSES STRUGGLE FOR POWER

The American trade union movement has long been a hindrance to the struggle of gigantic industries with unorganised workers, and the most successful of these has been John L. Lewis, with his leadership of the powerful C.I.O. and I.W.O. of the American miners. The cause of Phil Murray has lately seemed to indicate that at Lewis in the recent attack on the American miners, but a report by the *Daily Express* American correspondent (12/2/46) seems to indicate that Lewis is playing for a yet bigger game.

"All through the American strike wave," said the report, "not a word has been heard from John L. Lewis, the union boss who led a mine strike nearly every year of the war. The reason: Lewis has other plans."

At the age of 66 he is plotting to become the most powerful man in America. His strategy is to unite disunited labour. His objective—15,000,000 workers to do his bidding.

He has already achieved the first step by taking his 500,000 miners back into the Right Wing American Federation of Labour. His next step will be to win control of the other big union body—the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Then Mr. Lewis will have the job he has always wanted—president-maker. He expects to win votes for his man by getting higher wages for everyone.

But will Lewis get there? He is not the only American union leader with political ambitions, and there seems a general tendency for even those who appear militant in leading strikes to frame their policy in such a way as to find favour with the White House and thus advance along the path towards the ruling class elite already followed by the British union leaders. So John L. may find

there's more than a little competition for the job of political boss of American industry.

And he may also find that the American workers are getting wise for him and withdrawing their support from such successful leaders and big game unionists. Already a revolutionary industrial organization exists in America—the I.W.O. It was the vanguard of the American workers in the days before Lewis and his puppet organizations were very heard of, and it remains a continual challenge to reformist unionism and a nucleus around which may form a wide movement of workers.

On Monday, 11th February, trouble began again at the Mestreside docks, when ten thousand workers refused to do overtime and stopped work at 5 p.m.; there were 10 ships waiting to be loaded or unloaded. The reason for their action is that large numbers of experienced dockers are being dismissed at ridiculous rates and that it would be better to reinstate them rather than to do continual overtime work. The dockers point out that while they receive £1 18s. 0d. for their 8 hours' overtime, such a large part of this goes in income tax that it is not worth their while to carry it on, especially when other men are being thrown out of work.

The men have since returned, on the promise of a new system.

Laundry workers in Liverpool, Birkenhead and Stoke in the number of several hundreds, have gone on strike over the exclusion of a wages increase from a tentative agreement between union and employers. It is expected that they will be followed by workers in London laundries.

LABOUR LAW AND ORDER

HOLLYWOOD could not have better staged a picture of the present situation in America and the highly polished politicians at Westminster.

The stage was very elaborately set for the political farce, produced to capture the appreciative applause from the mesmerized gallery. The set was intended to display the bitter animosity between the Government and the Opposition over a reactionary law. The hero of the piece is supposed to be the Labour Party with the Tories cast as the villains. As a piece of public entertainment it stinks, but as a revelation of Muskelyne political illusion it succeeds. Bevin has thumped the box and roared his anger, and Hogg and Eden have risen to their roles in magnificent style.

The whole farce might have had a little more success had not Mr. Henderson Stewart, in his broadest in the "Week in Westminster" series, revealed that although there may be considerable agreement in the debate, in all his years in Parliament he did not remember such a feeling of friendliness behind the scenes.

Under the political glamour, there is no basic disagreement between the Government and the Opposition. On all fundamental issues there is unanimity: unanimity on war, on finance, on constitution, on Law and Order and certainly on the matter of labour control. Should the Socialists and the Tories part company on all other issues (sic) all the records show that they can be trusted to form a coalition of tyranny to smash down any workers' revolt for emancipation.

Were it not for the fact that we have become accustomed to the sort of ballyhoo and trickery accompanying the repeal of this act, we would feel little more than utter disgust and anger that these politicians could dip their delicate hands into such a squalid period of workers' betrayal for a subject to use for self glorification and political advantage.

The history of the General Strike should be well enough known for the workers not to fall for the easy interpretation put forward in *Reynolds News* (3/2/46) in attributing the sole

responsibility for the "Blacklist Charter" on a "Baldwin Bill". Baldwin, egged on by Churchill and Birkenhead thought to seize the opportunity to cripple the Trades Union and weaken the Labour Party.

The primary responsibility for this act clearly rests with the T.U.C. and the Labour bosses, who were guilty of the most flagrant betrayal that has continued right down through the following 19 years. The betrayal has been so complete, and the workers' established rights so subordinated to the arcadian of the T.U. and Labour plutocracy that the implication seen by *Reynolds News* in the Trades Dispute Act is little more than a mild joke.

True it is that the Baldwin government placed the Act on the Statute Book, but the Tories did no more than confirm the duplicity of the T.U. officials and placate the capitalists.

The worker, living in his shabby surroundings, experiencing the effects of poverty and economic exploitation, born in suppression and reared in a home where the continual struggle for the wherewithal to live goes on unceasingly, cares little for the Statute Book and the Constitution when he engages in the battle for bread against the robbing ruling class. The fact that the Peers, and industrial Barons, with the T.U. officials and Cabinet Ministers receiving their huge salaries, discuss the illegality of strikes, leaves him pretty cold.

To the worker, the right to strike is as fundamental as his right to breathe. That right will be exercised when conditions drive him to action. It alters nothing that really matters in a dispute, that laws have been passed, or acts have been repealed. Poverty, sympathy or aggravation cannot be made legal or illegal by the decision of the usurpers in Parliament. The false position of the politician is clearly revealed over the recent dock strike. Although the dockers broke scores of laws—all the peace-time legislation plus the much more stringent war laws—the lawyers and politicians did not dare bring any of these dockers before the courts, any more than the Tories, Liberals or Socialists would have risked using the Trades Dispute Act in any of the hundreds of strikes in the past 19 years. The workers can exist without the law, but the rulers cannot.

It is significant that the only occasion that the Trades Dispute Act was ever used was by the man who thundered hypocritically against it the most. In 1943 Ernest Bevin used it against the powerless Trotskyists.

As the dockers made the government, the laws and the T.U.C. look ridiculous, so again in any industrial dispute the most that the Labour government and the T.U.C. could hope for would be to hide behind the army and strengthened police force, and smash down the workers under the fantastic constitution and legal system.

(continued on p. 4)

ANARCHIST MEETINGS IN GLASGOW
at the GROVE STADIUM
(Broadalbano Street)
at the junction of St. Vincent and Argyle Street
EVERY SUNDAY, at 7 p.m.
EVERY WEDNESDAY at 8 p.m.
at the P.P.U. ROOMS
48 Dundas Street
(Top Floor)

THE LEVELLERS

a past struggle for freedom

Discontent In The Army

The discontent of the time, with which these men were connected, is the very thing which made them the most important of the period, and perhaps the only one in which they had any part. At that time, the army was the only body which was not controlled by the government, and the Levellers were the only body which was not controlled by the army.

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The Agitators

In 1647 the movement of discontent proved towards a crisis, and the rank and file soldiers began to organize themselves into a revolutionary force. Their demands threatened parliament, which attempted to disarm the army and send

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ANARCHISM AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The following is the first part of an article which the great Italian Anarchist, Malatesta, contributed to *Freedom* in November 1907. Its analysis of the part Anarchists can play in the Labour movement is still valuable today, when workers are seriously concerned with the future of the Trade Unions as means of working class action. Indeed, Malatesta's views have been all too sadly confirmed by the history of the organized Labour Movement.

The position of the position to be taken in relation to the Labour movement is certainly one of the greatest importance to Anarchists.

In spite of lengthy discussions and of varied experiences, a complete accord has not yet been reached—perhaps because the question does not admit of a complete and permanent solution, owing to the different conditions and changing circumstances in which we carry on the struggle.

I believe, however, that our aim may suggest to us a criterion of conduct applicable to the different contingencies. We desire the moral and material elevation of all men; we wish to achieve a revolution which will give to all liberty and well-being, and we are convinced that this cannot be done from above by force of law and decrees, but must be done by the conscious will and the direct action of those who desire it.

Action Better Than Preaching

It does not suffice for us—though it is certainly useful and necessary—to elaborate an ideal as perfect as possible, and to form groups for propaganda and for revolutionary action. We must convert as far as possible the existing society into a new one. And since to rise from the submissive state in which the great majority of the proletarians now vegetate, to a conception of Anarchism and a desire for its realization, is required an evolution which generally is not passed through under the sole influence of the propaganda; since the lessons derived from the facts of daily life are more efficacious than all doctrinaire preaching, it is for us to take an active part in the life of the masses, and to use all the means which circumstances permit to gradually awaken the spirit of revolt, and to show by these facts the path which leads to emancipation.

Amongst these means the Labour movement stands first, and we should be wrong to neglect it. In this movement we find numbers of workers who struggle for the amelioration of their conditions. They may be mistaken as to the aim they have in view and as to the means of attaining it, and in our view they generally are. But at least they no longer resign themselves to oppression nor regard it as just—they hope and they struggle. We can more easily arouse in them that feeling of solidarity towards their exploited fellow-workers and of hatred against exploitation which must lead to a definitive struggle for the abolition of all domination of man over man. We can induce them to claim more and more, and by means more and more energetic; and so we can train ourselves and others to the struggle, profiting by victories in order to exalt the power of union and of direct action, and bring forward greater claims, and profiting also by reverses in order to learn the necessity for more powerful means and for more radical solutions.

Again—and this is not its least advantage—the Labour movement can prepare these groups of technical workers who in the revolution will take upon themselves the organization of production and exchange for the advantage of all, beyond and against all governmental power.

But with all these advantages the Labour movement has its drawbacks and its dangers, of which we ought to take account when it is a question of the position that we as Anarchists should take in it.

Tendency To Degenerate

Constant experience in all countries shows that Labour movements, which always commence as movements of protest and revolt, and are animated at the beginning by a broad spirit of progress and human fraternity, tend very soon to degenerate, and in proportion as they acquire strength, they become egoistic, conservative, occupied exclusively with interests immediate and restricted, and develop within themselves a bureaucracy which, as in all such cases, has no other object than to strengthen and aggrandize itself.

It is in this condition of things that has induced many comrades to withdraw from the Trade Union movement, and even to combat it as something reactionary and injurious. But the result has been that our influence diminished accordingly, and the field was left free to those who wished to exploit the movement for personal or party interests that had nothing in common with the cause of the workers' emancipation. Very few there were only organizations with a narrow spirit and fundamentally conservative, of which the English Trade Unions are a type, or else Syndicates which, under the influence of politicians, most often "Socialists," were only electrical machines for the elevation into power of particular individuals.

Happily, other comrades thought that the Labour movement always held in itself a sound principle, and that rather than abandon it to the politicians, it would be well to undertake the task of bringing the unions out from the work of achieving their original aim, and of gaining from them all the advantages they offer to the Anarchist cause. And they have succeeded

in creating, chiefly in France, a new movement which, under the name of "Revolutionary Syndicalism," seeks to organize the workers independently of all bourgeois and political influence, to win their emancipation by the direct action of the wage-slaves against the masters.

That is a great step in advance, but we must not exaggerate its results and imagine, as some comrades seem to do, that we shall realize Anarchism, as a matter of course, by the progressive development of Syndicalism.

Every institution has a tendency to extend its functions, to perpetuate itself, and to become an end in itself. It is not surprising, then, if those who have initiated the movement, and take the most prominent part therein, fall into the habit of regarding Syndicalism as the equivalent of Anarchism, or at least as the supreme means, that in itself replaces all other means for the realization of the ideal. But this makes it the more necessary to avoid the danger and to defend well our position.

Syndicalism, in spite of all the declarations of its most ardent supporters, contains in itself, by the very nature of its functions, the seeds of its own destruction. It is a fact that the Labour movement in the past, in effect being a movement which proposed to defend the present interests of the workers, it must necessarily adapt itself to existing conditions, and take into consideration interests which come to the fore in society as it exists to-day.

Now, in so far as the interests of a section of the workers coincide with the interests of the whole class, Syndicalism is in itself a good school of solidarity; in so far as the interests of the workers of one country are the same as those of the workers in other countries, Syndicalism is a good means of furthering international brotherhood; in so far as the interests of the workers are not in contradiction with the interests of the future, Syndicalism is in itself a good preparation for the Revolution. But unfortunately this is not always so.

Harmony of interests, solidarity amongst all men, is the ideal to which we aspire, it is the aim for which we struggle, but that is not the actual condition, no more between men of the same class than between those of different classes. The rule to-day is the antagonism and the interdependence of interests; at the same time the struggle of each against all and of all against each. And there can be no other condition in a society where, in consequence of the capitalist system of production—that is to say, production founded on monopoly of the means of production and organized internationally for the profit of individual employers—there are, as a rule, more hands than work to be done, and more mouths than bread to fill them.

Contradictions For The Individual

It is impossible to isolate oneself, whether as an individual, as a class, or as a nation, since the condition of each one depends more or less directly on the general condition of the whole of humanity, and it is impossible to live in a true state of peace, because it is necessary to defend oneself, often even to attack, or perish.

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The Mines Nationalisation Bill

THE much heralded Bill for the nationalisation of the mines and coalfields is the subject of a special feature in this issue of the *Observer*. The Bill is a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country, and its passage through Parliament will be a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country. The Bill is a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country, and its passage through Parliament will be a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country.

At the risk of being accused of belabouring the obvious, it is worth pointing out that, on the surface at least, the Bill is a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country, and its passage through Parliament will be a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country.

It is not necessary to reiterate the fact that the Bill is a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country, and its passage through Parliament will be a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country.

The only really genuine consideration of the Bill is the one which is contained in the Bill itself. The Bill is a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country, and its passage through Parliament will be a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country.

After many years of agitation by the miners for the nationalisation of the coal industry, the Bill is a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country, and its passage through Parliament will be a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country.

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It is based on the Reid Report. Officially known as the Coal Mines Bill, it is a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country, and its passage through Parliament will be a landmark in the history of the coal industry in this country.

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The Russian Elections

FOR the first time in eight years the Russian people have gone to the polls to elect a new Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Supreme Soviet consists of two Parliament: The Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities and is elected every four years.

The Soviet of the Union has 656 seats and is elected on the basis of one deputy for every 300,000 of the population. The Soviet of Nationalities has 631 seats on the basis of twenty-five deputies from each constituent republic, irrespective of its size, eleven deputies from each autonomous republic, five deputies from each autonomous province and one deputy from each national region. Voting is by universal suffrage for all who have reached 18, 'irrespective of sex, nationality, race, faith, social origin, property status or past activities'. Candidates must be over 23.

The Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. elects a Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. composed of 37 members and endowed with great power. Theoretically the legislative power belongs to the Supreme Soviet but the Presidium has the right to issue decrees which have the power of law. The members of the Presidium cannot be removed by the Supreme Soviet but they have the right to dissolve the Supreme Soviet in case of an insurmountable difference arising between the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities.

The Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. also appoints the highest executive and administrative organ of State Power, the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. who deal with the international organisation of the country.

The term Supreme Soviet is highly misleading. It has nothing in common with the Soviets which were formed during the Russian revolution and were councils of workers' delegates (or peasants and soldiers) elected by a relatively small number of people and directly responsible to them. The deputies in the Soviet of the Union each represent something like three hundred thousand men and women and remain in office for four years. Not a very direct kind of representation.

What is the difference between the Russian parliamentary system and that of democratic countries? The main difference is that under the Soviet regime there are no opposition parties. The right to nominate candidates is reserved to official bodies that is to say, Communist Party organisations, trade unions, co-operatives, organisations of youth, cultural societies. The candidates who are not Communist Party members are described as non-party but they are in fact supporters of the Party. Stalin stressed the point, in his election broadcast on the 9th February, that non-party people were now united

with the Communists in one common front of Soviet citizens which forged the history of their country's destiny.

The only difference between them, said Stalin, "is that some belong to the party while others do not. But this is a formal difference" (Gullies ours).

Under the Soviet system there is no chance to choose between candidates representing two or more policies as there is only one Party in the State, the Communist Party.

The choice of the candidates is not left to the electors at the time of the election. Several candidates are nominated for each constituency and except in constituencies which have such illustrious candidates as Stalin, Molotov, Khrushchev, Voroshilov, Zhukov, etc., a certain amount of discussion takes place before the solitary candidate is decided upon. Once he is chosen voting becomes a pure formality, the only way to express opposition to the candidate is to abstain from voting but as in the plebiscites organised in fascist countries great care is taken to get a maximum of voters to the polls (age is no excuse, in Georgia an old man of 118 went to the polls).

In a police state such as Russia it is probable that more than mere persuasion is used to ensure that the great majority of people fill in their ballot papers, though, of course, propaganda is used on a big scale. It is not surprising that the electors the illusion that they have power to pass judgment on the Communist Party. Stalin declared at the beginning of his speech: "The Communist Party of our country would be of little worth were it ready to accept the electors' verdict." Having no rival parties to oppose it, being supported by a Party controlled Press and radio, having at its command the army, the police and millions of bureaucrats it would be very difficult indeed to understand why the Communist Party should be afraid of the electors' verdict.

No wonder Stalin's speech was "confident" (*Daily Worker*). He was spared the exhausting propaganda tours that politicians such as Churchill or Roosevelt had to undertake in order to secure re-election. Not for him the speeches on top of cars or standing in the rain, nor for him the last minute Press campaigns skillfully calculated to destroy weeks of propaganda work. Stalin's re-election was preceded by a unanimous concert of praises. *Pravda*, for example, paid this inspired tribute:

"It is indeed happiness, real happiness, to meet Comrade Stalin. If one translated the endless exclamations in the language of simple words they would read: 'We are proud that the greatest man of our day, the brilliant creator of victory, the saviour of civilisation, the leader of the peoples, belongs to us, to our country, to our people. We know and are deeply convinced that the greatest man of our time could not appear in any other country but ours'."

And from Radio Khabarovsk (6/1/46): "Yesterday's pre-election meeting in the Stalin precinct of Moscow left one with an unforgettable and inspiring impression. It reflected with great power and sincerity the boundless love the people bear for their great leader, wise teacher and father, Comrade Stalin!"

"Dear Comrades," declared the woman worker A. A. Slobodov, "it is the great fortune of our people that during the difficult years of the war it was Comrade Stalin, deputy of the entire people, who stood at the head of the state. . . . Glory! Glory to our own J. V. Stalin! . . . His words are an expression of the innermost thoughts, feelings and hopes of the Soviet people!"

When the votes were counted in Stalin's constituency in Moscow, it was found that 100 per cent. of the voters had cast their votes for Stalin. Probably nobody dared to give Stalin the advice Kingsley Martin gave to Tito a few days before Yugoslavia's elections: "I hope you will get 75 per cent," said K. Martin, "If you get 90 per cent, it might be a good idea to destroy 25 per cent. of your vote."

Stalin is different, of course, but 100 per cent. does not sound very convincing, somehow. M. L. B.

Protest against Detention of Adolfo Callabiano

On Sunday, the 10th February, a large crowd attended the open-air meeting in Hyde Park to protest against the police attacks on people selling literature outside the park gates, and to draw attention to the case of Adolfo Callabiano, who has been certified as insane and incarcerated in Friern Mental Hospital as the culmination of a whole series of police persecutions to which he had been subjected at Hyde Park during the preceding months (a full report of his case was given in the last issue of *Freedom*).

The meeting was addressed by representatives of all the organisations who have been concerned in the attacks on civil liberties at Hyde Park, and the audience was large and sympathetic. An interesting feature of the meeting was the large number of police officers present, of whom two industriously took down all the speeches in their notebooks.

By the time this note appears in print it will be two and a half months since Callabiano was first arrested on the charges which led to his incarceration in Friern Hospital. So far no efforts have been made by the authori-

ties, in spite of wide public protests, to do anything to rectify the manifest miscarriage of justice in this case. We need hardly point out that this event forms a most sinister precedent, since, if the authorities once get away with the shutting in a lunatic asylum of a man who has shown his steadfast opposition to and contempt for the police, they may decide to repeat it, and any sign of enthusiasm may be used as the excuse for detaining a militant worker on a plea of insanity.

Chuter Ede and his associates have made this monstrous attack on freedom a matter for laughter. The House of Commons amused itself over the deliberately distorted accounts of the incident to which it was treated. These facts only show more clearly the complete perfidy of the present administration and the insubstantiality of the concern for workers' freedom which they pretended to show when they were out of power.

Demand Callabiano's immediate release and the public exposure of those who were responsible for the conspiracy against freedom involved in his incarceration!

TOM CARLISLE

THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

Despite Corporation on Monday decided by a majority to offer the freedom of the city to Mr. George Bernard Shaw. The motion was proposed by the former Labour leader Mr. Jim Larkin, who, who stated that in 1939, when Shaw was 80, he was in danger of being killed by a car. Shaw proved the patriotism by being one of the first to go to the War Office to offer his services in London and to the War Office in London.

USEFUL PRESENTS

Mr. Ramsbotham's speech on Monday for the purpose of securing the freedom of the city to Mr. George Bernard Shaw. The motion was proposed by the former Labour leader Mr. Jim Larkin, who, who stated that in 1939, when Shaw was 80, he was in danger of being killed by a car. Shaw proved the patriotism by being one of the first to go to the War Office to offer his services in London and to the War Office in London.

USELESS TOIL—AMEN!

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Through the Press

AERIAL CLASS WARFARE

United States military aircraft are patrolling steel plants in some parts of the United States as the steel strike enters its third day without apparent prospect of settlement.

One small airplane radioed, "No sight of enemy" as it cruised over the strike-bound Bethlehem Steel plant in Pennsylvania.

The patrolling airplanes were put in the air by union leaders in an effort to learn the identity of other aircraft reported to be dropping supplies to the steel plants.

One company spokesman admitted that airplanes were bringing in emergency personnel supplies including food for the maintenance crew.

Evening Standard, 23/1/46.

SAVING CAMPAIGN

Opposition is growing to the campaign that, supposedly, the car in the Army museum—introduced by M. André Philley, French Minister.

Gen. Tim. Child at the General Staff, and Gen. de Lattre de Tassigny, Inspector-General of the Army, have now been ordered.

The car, which was the property of the French Army, was destroyed by the Germans in 1940.

Mr. Philley, however, said that the car was not destroyed by the Germans in 1940.

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DEMOCRACY AT WORK

The United States Embassy in Paris has given a plain hint to the Premier, M. Gouin, that a loan to France is highly improbable and that, in any case, Congress would hardly agree to financial assistance if the Government proposed with its large-scale nationalisation programme.

Reynolds News, 10/2/46.

BOOKS BY THE YARD

London's antiquarian bookellers, famous all over the world for their rare editions and their priceless illuminated manuscripts, are selling them under the counter and behind locked doors. It is a measure self-imposed by the bookellers as a protection against black market operators who have invaded the market.

Mr. Charles E. Harter, in whose shop in Marshfield House Street you can pay as much as £1,000 for a book, yesterday took me to his office on the first floor, shut the door and discreetly rolled up the shade wire.

The other day in a well known shop I was shocked to discover one of those people in a loud voice saying he wanted to buy an early edition of *War and Peace* and he had a lot of money which he wanted to use.

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INDO-CHINESE GRIEVANCES

Here in brief are the main complaints of the Annamese, who constitute about three-fourths of the population of Indo-China. Voting is restricted to French citizens, so a mere fraction of the people can take part in political affairs. Almost half of the revenue goes to administrative expenses. Education of natives has been left back by the French practice of assigning places in the lycées to so many French students that Indo-Chinese are left a comparatively small number of educational opportunities. An economic stranglehold prevails that necessitates ever-increasing exports of produce in order to meet the budget, largely because of the excess exports go not to the people, but to French investors.

There have been a series of questionable loan practices, among them the scheme conceived in 1922 by which natives were induced to invest meagre savings in government bonds, in a gamble that they might win prizes put up on a lottery basis—but which never more than two per cent. of the investors might win. But more than that, grievance after grievance, the current situation, there is hope that at least marked gain may be expected from the new French Government, with its general promises and liberal complexion.

The New Leader, U.S.A., 12/1/46.

POST-REVOLUTION MAJORITY

Russia's population is now 141,000,000, of whom 100,000,000 are of Russian origin. The Revolution, however, has not yet brought about the necessary changes in the official statistics. This is the situation at the present time, according to the latest figures from the Soviet Government.

The New Leader, U.S.A., 12/1/46.

COST OF TALK

A recent statement by the Soviet Government, according to which the cost of the Revolution was 100,000,000,000 rubles, has been widely quoted. This is the situation at the present time, according to the latest figures from the Soviet Government.

WHAT DID THE BRITISH DELEGATION SEE IN POLAND?

Several weeks ago a delegation of the British Socialist co-operative movement, including several persons close to the present Labour Government, left London for Poland. Dispatches from Poznan soon brought the news that the Soviet commander of the airfield in Poznan arrested the prominent British guests and released them only after the British Government and the British Embassy in Warsaw intervened in their behalf.

Although the delegation covered a large part of Poland and although it has returned to Britain some time ago, it has not published a word by way of report on what it saw in Poland. In British parliamentary circles this mysterious silence of the delegation led to a great deal of speculation, so much so that one of the Scottish dailies, *The Herald*, asked a member of the delegation, Robert Taylor, for his impressions of Poland and for an explanation of the strange secrecy with regard to them.

Before his trip to Poland, Taylor had urged the Poles in England to go home as quickly as possible. Now, after his return from that country, he is of another opinion and states that after his visit to Poland he has "acquired much deeper sympathy and understanding from the viewpoint of those who at present deem it their duty to remain in exile."

There are many things, he said, which he would like to say publicly in the hope that conditions in Poland might undergo a change, but at the present moment he is not empowered to do so.

The members of the delegation, he declared, were so disturbed by certain things which they witnessed in Poland that before the publication of their official report, they considered it advisable to confer with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Bevin suggested that they should publish their report at the present time, and the delegation complied with his advice.

The New Leader, U.S.A., 12/1/46.

CARELESS TALK

The German look at well fed or perhaps better fed than the British, and Mr. Roosevelt when he arrived in Frankfurt from London to the children especially appeared to be healthy in Germany, the said.

Manchester Guardian, 14/2/46.

Mr. Roosevelt made this statement, according to another newspaper, two hours after having landed in Germany. Statistics regarding mortality both amongst adults and children tell another story.

